Champs invalidants, capital actif: Mères handicapées et culture concertée

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Abstract

Cet article examine les expériences de mères handicapées qui pratiquent une culture concertée, un style parental couramment pratiqué dans les communautés de la classe moyenne. L'auteur explore les expériences de ces mères dans les «champs» de l'école de leurs enfants et organise des activités parascolaires. Les résultats mettent en lumière les ruptures dans l'habitus de la classe moyenne de ces mères lorsqu'elles se heurtent aux barrières d'accessibilité et à l'exclusion sociale tout en pratiquant une culture concertée. On a constaté que ces mères déployaient simultanément des ressources basées sur les classes pour surmonter ces obstacles. Cette analyse met à nu les façons dont l'habitus de culture concertée suppose une identité non handicapée.

Mots-clés: *culture concertée, parentalité, maternité, classe sociale*

Introduction

«Je suis vraiment actif. Je prends mon fils skier. Je veux m'assurer qu'il a une enfance normale et qu'il a grandi avec des choses normales ». C'est ainsi que Melissa, une utilisatrice de fauteuil roulant âgée de 44 ans, a décrit ses valeurs parentales. Les chercheurs en études sur le handicap ont légitimement placé la normalité au cœur de nos critiques du handicap. Pourtant, pour Melissa, le désir de donner à son fils une «enfance normale» est lié, non seulement à son identité de handicap, mais également à son identité de classe sociale. En se concentrant sur l'importance de fournir des activités et des expériences enrichissantes à son enfant, Melissa adopte un style parental commun aux communautés de la classe moyenne, que la sociologue Annette Lareau a qualifié de culture concertée. Sous une culture concertée, les parents de la classe moyenne considèrent leurs enfants comme des projets à développer grâce à une surveillance parentale intensive, à un plaidoyer et à d'importants investissements en temps et en ressources. Cependant, comme c'est le cas pour d'autres mères handicapées, les expériences de Melissa en matière de cultivation concertée sont profondément façonnées par son identité de handicap.

This article examines the experiences of mothers with disabilities who engage in concerted cultivation. Through interviews and focus groups with mothers who have sensory and/or physical disabilities, I explore these women's experiences performing this middle-class style of parenting. I illuminate ruptures in these mothers' habitus, which occur as they confront accessibility barriers and social exclusion in the fields of their children's schools and extracurricular activities. I also identify how these mothers

simultaneously deploy class-based resources to resist these barriers. This analysis lays bare the ways in which the concerted habitus presumes a nondisabled identity1.

Habitus, Field, And Symbolic Violence

I begin by defining the terms, «habitus,» «field,» and «symbolic violence,» concepts I will be employing throughout this analysis. Social theorist Pierre Bourdieu popularized these terms to illuminate the interaction between social class positioning and the arrangements of the institutions in which we operate. Bourdieu defined habitus «as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which [...] functions at every moment as a matrix of *perceptions, appreciations, and actions»* (Bourdieu 1977:82-83; italics in the original). In other words, habitus refers to the ways our social class positions become embodied in our worldviews, tastes, and habituated actions. A key marker of habitus is the «ease» in which actors carry out a particular social class identity, as habitus is located within our muscle memory, created through repeated action (Khan 2011).

Habitus cannot be understood without knowledge of what Bourdieu termed «field.» Field refers to the arenas in which we enact our habitus. In every field there exists a dominant set of rules that guide the games played in the field. The actor whose habitus is closely aligned with the rules in a given field will reap the most advantages.

Finally, actors will experience what Bourdieu termed «symbolic violence» when their habitus is out of step with the favored habitus in a given field. In fact, those who experience a misfit between their own habitus and the norms of a given field can reveal some of the unspoken expectations about who should occupy space in a particular social setting (Carter 2006; Lehmann 2014). Exploring the embodied experiences of people with disabilities becomes salient for precisely this reason. Centering the experiences of Deaf/disabled people can illuminate the ways in which the dis/ability system is configured into the fields of education, as well as the forms of habitus rewarded in these fields (Edwards and Imrie 2003; Engmann and Cranford 2016; Hale 2015).

In her formative book, Unequal Childhoods, sociologist Annette Lareau (2003) identified a distinct parenting habitus practiced by middle-class parents. «Concerted cultivation» is an orientation toward parenting in which parents, particularly mothers, view their children as projects that need to be cultivated to enhance their intellect, talents, and language skills. Practices imbedded in this habitus include involving kids in numerous extracurricular activities, developing language skills at home, and intervening to advocate for their children within educational and extracurricular settings. In contrast to concerted cultivation, Lareau found that working class and poor families tend to employ a parenting logic she termed «the accomplishment of natural growth.» Under natural growth, children spend most of their leisure time in unstructured play rather than extracurricular activities, parents do not actively cultivate language skills at home, and parents are reluctant to engage with school officials.

Middle class parents are found to employ their social and cultural capital to successfully intervene on behalf of their children within educational settings and to encourage their children to become their own advocates (Calarco 2014; Cucchiara and Horvat 2009; Lareau 2003; Nelson 2010). The professional social circles in which these parents are imbedded enable them to benefit from valuable information about educational and extracurricular opportunities. Their cultural capital also enables them to successfully extract rewards from these institutions, all while being perceived as «good parents» by professionals in educational settings.

Lareau argued social class is most salient in shaping parenting practices. Others, however, have argued that the concerted cultivation habitus is more easily embodied and more frequently rewarded when enacted by white, middle class parents. For example, African American and Latino parents are less likely to be involved in their children's schools or to enroll their children in structured extracurricular activities than white parents, even when controlling for social class (Bodovski 2010; Cheadle 2008; Lee and Kao 2009). Evidence also suggests the rewards of the concerted cultivation habitus are more easily garnered by white middle-class families (Dumais et al. 2012; Lee and Kao 2009). For example, Dumais et al. (2012) found that teachers evaluated African American children more poorly when parents have made special requests of the teacher.

Bringing Disability In

Though the intersection of social class, race, and parenting has been explored, we still know little about how social class and dis/ability interact to shape parenting practices and experiences. When it comes to disability, social class, and parenting, researchers have primarily focused on the experiences of nondisabled parents raising disabled children. Much disability research in the American context has focused on the ways federal disability law, designed to encourage parental involvement, often rewards those families who possess the forms of social and cultural capital necessary to successfully advocate on behalf of their children within educational settings (Ong-Dean 2009; Trainor 2010). Researchers have identified how educators reward parents who display forms of cultural capital expected of middle class families and penalize those parents who do not express commitments to the cultivation of their children or high levels of engagement with professionals (Blum 2015; Mauldin 2016).

Missing in this conversation, however, have been the voices of mothers with disabilities. Like women from other marginalized groups, mothers with disabilities are found to face particular challenges, including high levels of social scrutiny and state surveillance (Frederick 2015, 2017A; Malacrida 2009; Rivera Drew 2009). Yet, these mothers are also found to employ innovative and highly adaptive strategies to negotiate both the embodied limitations of their impairments and the social barriers they face (Frederick 2017B; Malacrida 2009; Najarian Souza 2010). Social class has rarely been taken up within these analyses however. In one exception, Cassiman (2011) examined the resistance strategies of poor mothers with disabilities, finding they often practice avoidance to protect themselves and their families from state surveillance. Though some studies have found that mothers at times use strategies to challenge disability-related stigma, such as being heavily involved in their children's schools and assuming the role of advocate (Frederick 2017B; Malacrida 2009; Najarian Souza 2010), the ways these strategies are inflected by social class identities remains under-explored. Thus, this study is well-positioned to further our understanding of the intersections of motherhood, social class, and disability.

Methods

Findings from this study are drawn from 18 interviews conducted with mothers who have sensory and/or physical disabilities, as well as one focus group conducted with 15 blind mothers. Both the 18 interviews and the one focus group analyzed were conducted as part of a larger study of mothers with disabilities. Given this analysis focuses specifically on the experiences of mothers who engage in concerted cultivation, I identified 18 mothers from the larger sample who engage in elements of concerted cultivation by maintaining a presence at their children's schools and by involving their children in organized extracurricular activities. Though the larger study included three focus groups with blind

mothers, I include data from only one focus group, because discussions in this group focused on dilemmas with educational involvement and extracurricular participation.

Of the 18 mothers included, seven have physical disabilities, seven identify as blind, and four identify as Deaf. Interview participants ranged in age from 30 to 47; most were in their thirties. Though the larger study sample of mothers was more racially diverse, the 18 mothers who discussed elements of concerted cultivation are an extremely homogeneous group. Sixteen of the 18 mothers who discussed elements of concerted cultivation are white. One participant is Black, and one is biracial.

Interviews were conducted between May of 2013 and August of 2014 by the author. Interview and focus group participants were recruited through announcements shared with local organizations and online communities related to disability, and through the snowball method. Eleven interviews were conducted by phone, and seven were conducted face-to-face. The focus group was conducted during the 2013 national convention of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB).

Though the mothers in this analysis all expressed a commitment to tenets of concerted cultivation, they frequently confronted a misfit between their own bodies and ways of mothering and the fields in which they exercised this middle-class parenting habitus. Melissa, whom we met in the introduction, touted the concerted cultivation style of parenting as she used the word «normal» to describe wanting to fill her child's life with skiing and other organized sports and leisure activities. Skiing is a sport most often engaged in by the middle and upper classes, due to the cost involved and the cultural familiarity among these groups (Bourdieu 1977). Yet, Melissa, who became paralyzed in early adulthood, recognized how the «normalcy» of an active middle-class family life could be called into question now that she has a physical disability.

Melissa also regularly confronts a disconnect between her concerted cultivation habitus and the inaccessible spaces she negotiates as a disabled mother committed to concerted cultivation. She discussed her experiences participating in a mother's group with her young child.

In the *mothers' group*, we'd do all these field trips, and the field trips were really challenging for me. Like... we'd do a hay ride, and there would be stairs to get up there. And I don't want my son being left out, so I would bump up the stairs on my bottom and get up there and make sure that I was doing it with him. I don't know, I would just always make sure that he wasn't going to miss out on anything because of me. Either find someone who could take him or just really challenge myself to do things I wouldn't normally try and do, because, really, doing a hay ride isn't that important to me.

When Melissa finds someone else to accompany her son to activities, she compromises a tenet of concerted cultivation, which demands direct parental involvement. Asking someone else to accompany her son, she must also compromise opportunities to gain social and cultural capital through interaction with other parents. On the other hand, when Melissa fulfills the obligations of concerted cultivation by accompanying her son on activities, she is forced to forfeit the bodily comportment of middle-class habitus. Melissa has to put her body in compromising positions, such as crawling up stairs to board a hay ride, in order to fulfill the demands of middle-class mothering. Each decision Melissa makes to negotiate these dilemmas requires a deliberation not demanded of other middle-class mothers, who move with ease in a field constructed with their needs and body types prioritized. Thus, the field of extracurricular activities is disabling, as it causes Melissa's concerted cultivation habitus to be compromised, no matter how she chooses to negotiate these dilemmas.

Blind mothers in the focus group also discussed at length the challenges they face with transportation. Stephanie explained:

Transportation remains just a huge frustrator. Because no matter what it is you're doing, you know, there are some places you can't get to. ... And especially when your kids get more active and involved in activities. ... You know, because you can't always take cabs everywhere either, and they're not always timely. And when you gotta get 'em where they need to be at a certain time. And you know sometimes you try things like that, and he's mortified (laughs) because you know you're late or you know, «Everyone else is leaving. How come we can't go?» You know, all the buses stop running after six. ... So that's just a huge frustrator always.

Other mothers in the focus group echoed Stephanie's frustration with transportation. Their disrupted middle-class habitus reveals a key assumption imbedded in the field of extracurricular activities. These activities are often structured with the assumption that parents own cars and drive. Parents are expected to drop off their children and pick them up within minutes of the activity start and end times. And as Stephanie observed, activities are not always located within access to public transportation and do not correspond with bus schedules. Stephanie's quote also reveals the discomfort she felt as her son recognized she does not perform the habitus of middle-class mothers with the same ease as other families. Rides have to be negotiated, taxis and buses waited for, as other middle-class parents and children get into their cars and drive away immediately after events end.

Mothers also face inaccessible practices as they involve themselves in their children's schools. Claire, who is deaf, attends school events for parents. But, she has often been excluded from information shared at these meetings. «If I go to meetings at school then, yeah, sometimes they just talk in a huge echo-y cafeteria, and I'm like there's no way I can hear in here.»

Sharon, who is also Deaf, discussed how reluctant other PTA members were to change their communication practices so she would be included in the parent organization.

I was volunteering. I was room mom in my son's kindergarten class and again in first grade. And I would go in and bring all these crafts for the kids and that sort of thing. And they saw, oh here's a kindergarten mom. She's already volunteering and being very active. Let's go ahead and ask her to sit on our board. And so, whenever they asked me to do that, I told them then, «I'm hard of hearing,» which I was at that time. ... And they said, «Oh, that's fine.» Well, again, there's that ignorance. «You can't hear; that's fine.» But then they ... don't necessarily go through any efforts to communicate with you any differently. They still view it as, «Oh yeah, you're Deaf. Behave just like we do.» So there was a lot of miscommunication, some aggravation.

Ostensibly, Sharon successfully enacts the preferred habitus educational institutions expect of mothers. She was so involved in her son's kindergarten and first grade classroom that she was tapped to sit on the PTA board at her children's school; subsequently, she was asked to serve on the county PTA board. Sharon was also honored with a «lifetime award» by the statewide PTA. Yet, despite her work on the PTA and her leadership accomplishments, Sharon experienced this field as disabling. She was prohibited from participating fully in conversations and decision-making processes because others were inflexible in their communication practices. Claire's and Sharon's experiences expose how practices that privilege nondisabled identities are imbedded in both field and habitus. Their experiences also illuminate how an inflexibility imbedded in middle-class habitus is a form of symbolic violence, excluding those with disabilities.

Disabling Fields: Social Exclusion

In addition to confronting accessibility issues, the mothers in this study also experience the fields of education and organized activities as «disabling» through social exclusion perpetuated by school staff and other mothers. Sharon recalled her experience being bullied by other mothers on the county PTA board, which she perceives as stemming from social exclusion based on her status as a Deaf woman.

I swear I felt like I was 6 years old on a playground somewhere. These adult women, some of them have 5 children of their own, and they're snickering and they're pointing and they're making fun of me. ... Eventually ... the county PTA president called me into a meeting with the regional PTA person. ... Basically they said, «You're just too different from us.» And that's actually a quote. «You're just too different.» ... And I thought, «I could blast them.» Because the PTA is still in the papers about being very active in things and diverse. Yeah, no, you're not.

Mothers discussed experiences of social exclusion, perpetuated not just from other parents, but from school professionals. Penny, who is blind, discussed a moment when her daughter's teacher's aide told her daughter that Penny would not be chaperoning an upcoming field trip because of her disability. «And she had a teacher's aide who was kind of silly. And I was chaperoning one of the field trips, and the teacher's aide made a comment to Kara that I couldn't chaperone the field trip because I'm blind.»

In this instance, both Penny and her daughter confronted a set of contradictory rules in the field. On the one hand, school professionals define «good mothers» as those who are actively involved in their children's education. On the other hand, a teacher's aide asserted that Penny was prohibited from engaging in this field because of her blindness. The teacher's aide reinforced this mother's exclusion by sharing her pronouncement with Penny's child rather than directly with Penny. In this moment, Penny would be constructed as a less than adequate mother, no matter which choice she made.

Penny's daughter Kara also had to negotiate this contradiction. Penny recounted, «And Kara goes, my mom will just bring her cane, you know, and that's how she'll do it. Kara still thinks she just didn't know how I use my cane.» Kara struggled to understand why a teacher would pronounce that her mother, whom she experiences as a competent person, would be prohibited from chaperoning an event.

Katherine, who is also blind, recounted experiencing deep fear and dread that she would face discrimination on a school field trip to an ice-skating rink.

We had a big to-do in *our city* a few years ago where a skating rink would not let a group of blind people skate. And I was thinking as we are going to this skating rink, like (sighs) please, like just please let them be reasonable. ... I had myself all worked up, like okay, I'm going to be calm, but ... I'm going to be firm on this point. I want to skate. And it was fine. They just gave me my skates. I went right on the ice. No big deal. But ... I told someone that story, and she said, «You know, it's really sad that you even have to think about things like that, like you even have to prepare.» Though participants identified multiple ways in which their middle class habitus is compromised by inaccessible arrangements and social exclusion, they are not passive victims of these forms of symbolic violence. Elsewhere, I have examined how mothers with disabilities engage in acts of everyday resistance to combat and protect themselves against discrimination (Frederick 2017B). I found that mothers engage in a combination of resistance strategies, including visibility politics, respectability politics, and disengagement. Here I explore how middle-class mothers with disabilities often simultaneously employ their social and cultural capital to confront and negotiate these disabling fields. I term this enactment of class-based privilege «enabling capital.»

Focus group participant, Stephanie, who expressed frustration about transportation, discussed how she relies on her social capital to overcome the challenge of getting her son to activities.

You know, we have a good network of parents and classmates' parents we've gotten to know, and they're all cool about the situation. We try to give them some money or try to offer to trade babysitting or something. You know, because they drive, and they'll take Charlie to a lot of practices and different things. But it always makes me feel kind of uncomfortable sometimes because they won't sometimes want to take anything, which is really nice of them. But I hate being in that position where it feels like you're always kind of needing to ask.

Stephanie employs social capital, tapping into her social networks to ensure her son is able to participate in extracurricular activities despite limited public transportation options in their town. Yet, Stephanie expressed a discomfort in the ways she must employ her social capital. For Stephanie, having to rely on other parents, and that these parents won't accept offers of reciprocity, feels like a violation of the value of independence imbedded in middle-class habitus.

Melissa identified how she uses her habitus as an active, engaged mother to overcome any social exclusion she might otherwise experience as a wheelchair user.

Melissa: Well, so, all the way through kindergarten, all the way through pre-school, I was in the classroom with him and I worked in the class and everything like that. He would go 3 days a week and I would be there. I was really involved and everything. That was fine. I think people, once they get to know me, then they're like, oh ok. I don't know what their preconceived ideas are or anything like that. I just make sure I'm around a lot.

Interviewer: So that's kind of your strategy for managing things?

Melissa: Yeah, that you don't have to be afraid. I'm just like everybody else. We're going to be involved. Don't not invite him, or me, or us. I'll figure it out, and we'll make it happen.

In several important ways, Melissa relies on her middle-class habitus to overcome social barriers. First, she maintains a high profile at her children's schools. In addition to the benefits she believes it offers her children, Melissa also relies on her high level of involvement as a mother to diminish people's initial discomfort with her. Of course, this strategy is most easily carried out because Melissa also possesses the cultural capital that would cause her to be viewed more favorably in this field.

Lisa, who has a physical disability, said that she has not experienced social exclusion as a mother. Lisa's wealth of social and cultural capital, combined with the fact that she lives in a small town, has likely shielded her from social stigma. Lisa is married to a prominent doctor in their community. In addition, Lisa's children have attended the same private school throughout their elementary and secondary education. When asked if she has experienced any moments of social exclusion as a mother, Lisa responded:

You know I really, I really didn't, but part of that I think is because we're in a smaller town, our boys started out in a private school and went from age three through eighth grade pretty much with the same kids. ... So you kind of knew everyone. I think it might have been different had it been in a larger public school, but when everyone kind of knows everyone else, I kind of have the utopia of disability life.

Research on concerted cultivation has illuminated how middle-class mothers employ their social and cultural capital to advocate for their children within educational institutions. The mothers interviewed here have a strikingly unique burden to shoulder, as

they must also advocate for themselves as mothers. Claire, who is Deaf, discussed how she advocates for herself when she's in large parent meetings where she can't hear.

Well, sometimes I bring my FM system mic to whoever's talking, and then I say, «Hi, where are you going to be speaking? I'd like to put my mic there.» And they say, «Oh, I'm going to be walking all around.» And I'm like, «Thanks a lot, that's great.» ... People aren't very helpful.

Claire employs the advocacy skills documented among middle class parents. Yet, the energy she must expend and the rewards she gains from these efforts are strikingly different from other middle-class mothers. First, Claire expends energy advocating, not only for her children, but also for herself as a Deaf mother. Second, the cultural capital she employs does not result in the same degree of pay-off as documented among nondisabled middle-class parents, as she is not always able to obtain the level of access she desires.

Penny discussed her plan to report the teacher's aide who told her daughter Penny would not be allowed to chaperone a school field trip.

And I still need to report this to the school district, because I need to get that teacher's aide in trouble. We're going to have a talk with the teacher's aide's boss, because it was not a good day. But, I went on the trip, because I wasn't going to let them say no. And I wasn't going to let them take that away from me. With that attitude, I'm like, no way.

Penny planned to employ her advocacy skills to challenge a practice she finds discriminatory. Like other mothers in the study, Penny's advocacy must extend beyond oversight of her daughter's well-being and must also include advocacy for her own rights as a disabled mother.

Shelley, who is blind, articulated how she draws from her cultural capital as an attorney to protect herself against the threat of state intervention. When her childcare center alerted Shelley that a state inspector was asking questions about Shelley's competence as a mother after seeing her drop her child off one morning, Shelley immediately moved into action. She contacted child protective services and threatened a lawsuit if any investigation was opened based on her blindness. Shelley recognized the role her professional status played in being able to successfully prevent an investigation by child protective services. «I don't know if they would have taken me seriously had I not been articulate and well educated. ... I mean, you've got to use the lawyer speak. ... I don't know that they would have stopped with other parents who don't know how to articulate the concern and the threat ...»

Finally, Deborah, who is blind, captured how negotiating the fields of education demands a vigilance not required of nondisabled individuals. Deborah reflected upon how surprising it was for her to observe the ease in which her nondisabled daughter engaged in activities as a child:

Because everything I did, everything from going to kindergarten, to going to Brownies, to baking, to writing essays at school. My parents always had to fight so hard, advocate so hard and nothing was just regular for me. It was very shocking for me to see, and I figured I would have to fight this good fight all the time like my parents had.

Deborah identified the ways her middle-class experiences have been disrupted by disability-based discrimination. Though Deborah described experiencing a highly active middle- class childhood, she expressed a deep sense of pain over the mistreatment she experienced and the high levels of advocacy required of her parents to break down walls of exclusion. Observing her own nondisabled daughter's «ease» in these spaces brought into

focus how exclusionary practices and ableist attitudes bar disabled people from experiencing the ease that is central to habitus.

Discussion

Since the publication of Annette Lareau's (2003) book Unequal Childhoods, scholars have explored how other dimensions of identity interact with social class in shaping how parents from various locations perform and experience concerted cultivation. Yet, little attention has been paid to the ways the dis/ability system is implicated in middle-class norms of parenting. The Deaf/disabled mothers in this study embodied the logic and practices of concerted cultivation. Ostensibly these mothers are fulfilling the demands of concerted cultivation. They are active in their children's schools. They involve their children in structured extracurricular activities, and they assume the role of advocate and overseer of their children's development. Yet, these mothers confront myriad obstacles in the fields of their children's schools and in organized extracurricular activities, and their performance demands a deliberation and intentionality not required of nondisabled middle-class mothers. It is when their habitus differs from their own upbringing, or when the ease of middle class habitus is out of reach, that the ways ability is inflected in this middle-class habitus is revealed.

The particularities of these mothers' experiences varies by disability type. Yet, taken together, these mothers' experiences reveal how the fields of schools and extracurricular activities are «disabling» in that they are constructed to privilege nondisabled bodies. Mothers with mobility impairments confront myriad inaccessible spaces, which are constructed as if «every body» can climb stairs or squeeze into cramped spaces. Deaf mothers who are met with indifference or resistance when they ask for flexibility in communication methods reveal how schools operate under the assumption that parents will, or should be, able-bodied.

Blind mothers' struggles with transportation reveal how an ease of movement is implicitly demanded of those performing concerted cultivation. Previous research has illuminated how the field of structured extracurricular activities demands middle-class privilege, as parents must have the resources and the flexibility to arrive and leave activities within minutes of start and end times (Lareau 2003). Chin and Phillips (2004) found that practical barriers of financial and time limitations rather than parenting ideologies drove differences in parents' pursuit of summer enrichment activities for their children across social class. The current study adds another dimension to previous findings. Fore, having access to a car and the ability to drive is not only a reflection of social class privilege. It is also a reflection of ability privilege. Furthermore, communities with inadequate public transportation systems not only disadvantage poor residents; they pose barriers for disabled community members, even those with social class privilege.

These mothers' experiences interacting with educational professionals and other parents also reveal how the middle-class fields prescribe that adult actors be nondisabled. Many of the other parents and educators express discomfort and create social distance between themselves and the mothers in the study, indicating their habitus is cultivated around an expectation of able-bodiedness. Furthermore, others' difficulty in showing flexibility in responding to these mothers' accessibility needs demonstrates how the middle-class habitus privileges nondisabled identities and needs.

The mothers in this study carry out tenets of concerted cultivation. Yet, the intentionality they are required to devote to this work strips them of the «ease» that comes with habitus. Mothers with mobility impairments are vigilant about making sure restrooms and other areas in potential activity sites are accessible. Deaf mothers remain

vigilant about being included in conversations and meetings for which access is taken for granted by hearing participants. And blind mothers exercise a great deal of labor to traverse transportation barriers. Finally, many of the mothers across disability identities discussed being intentional about negotiating the social distancing and outright exclusion they face from other parents and educational professionals.

These mothers frequently draw from their social and cultural capital to negotiate these challenges, yet their employment of capital does not easily garner the rewards that might be expected when employed by other middle-class parents. These findings are consistent with other research, which suggests that marginalized identities outside of social class can reduce the rewards social and cultural capital garner when enacted by middle and upper-class people with normative identities (Lee and Kao 2009; Trainor 2010).

This study points to important new terrain left to be explored in the areas of social class, disability, identity, and education. This study has illuminated mothers' experiences at the intersection of social class and disability. Yet, other status and identity markers are also at play and warrant attention in future studies. How do racial identities shape how Deaf/disabled mothers across social class locations experience school involvement? How do fathers' experiences differ from mothers'? Finally, much terrain is left to be uncovered in exploring how children experience the interaction of social class status and parents' disabilities. Through stories like Penny's above, we receive glimpses into the perceptions of children of mothers with disabilities, but future research should explore children's experiences and perspectives through their own voices.

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